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C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 003868

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA AND EUR/AGS - VIKMANIS-KELLER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/13/2015

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SUBJECT: DEMARCHE TO AUSTRIA: CONDEMNING THE ASSASSINATION OF GEBRAN TUENI

REF: STATE 223709

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Scott Kilner. Reason: 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) On December 13, EconPolCouns delivered the texts of the President's and the Secretary's statements on the assassination of Gebran Tueni to Ralph Scheide, the Austrian Foreign Ministry's assistant secretary-level Director for Middle East and African affairs. Scheide immediately had his staff pass the texts to Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik. He said Austria deferred to the UK Presidency to speak for EU member states, and added that Austria was solidly behind UK Foreign Secretary Straw's comments.

2. (C) Scheide said he is in frequent contact with Detlev Mehlis, and he had worked closely with Mehlis to make possible the interrogation of suspects in the Hariri assassination at UN facilities in Vienna. He said Austria would continue to play a helpful role, adding that the effectiveness of Austria's engagement depended on keeping it out of the public eye.
MCCAW